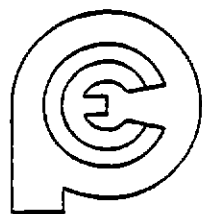


**IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES
COURSE CLASSIFICATION
SYSTEM**



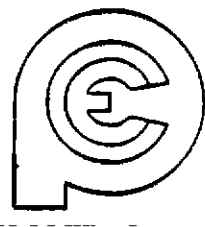
**CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION COMMISSION**

The California Postsecondary Education Commission was created by the Legislature and the Governor in 1974 as the successor to the California Coordinating Council for Higher Education in order to coordinate and plan for education in California beyond high school. As a state agency, the Commission is responsible for assuring that the State's resources for postsecondary education are utilized effectively and efficiently; for promoting diversity, innovation, and responsiveness to the needs of students and society; and for advising the Legislature and the Governor on statewide educational policy and funding.

The Commission consists of 15 members. Nine represent the general public, with three each appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Governor. The other six represent the major educational systems of the State.

The Commission holds regular public meetings throughout the year at which it takes action on staff studies and adopts positions on legislative proposals affecting postsecondary education. Further information about the Commission, its meetings, its staff, and its other publications may be obtained from the Commission offices at 1020 Twelfth Street, Sacramento, California 95814; telephone (916) 445-7933.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
COURSE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM



CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION
1020 Twelfth Street, Sacramento, California 95814

Commission Report 82-14

April 1982

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In implementing the Course Classification System and reporting course information based on it, the Community Colleges clearly have met the legislative mandate of AB 1626. The classification data collection and reporting efforts of the colleges and the Chancellor's Office have done much to improve our knowledge and understanding of Community College offerings. The Commission believes, however, that work remains to be done in bringing more accuracy and uniformity to the reporting of course classification data:

Adequacy of Reporting Process

Schedule for Implementation: The Commission believes that course classification information is essential to better understanding of the role of the California Community Colleges and recommends ongoing implementation of the Course Classification System as part of the annual data collection activities of the Chancellor's Office (p. 2).

Reporting Mechanisms: The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office institute a uniform reporting system for further implementation of the Course Classification System by (1) modifying the Course Activity Measures reporting process or (2) developing a comprehensive inventory of course offerings (p. 4).

Report Formats: The Commission recommends that in order to enhance the usefulness of the course classification information the Chancellor's Office review with local colleges, the Board of Governors, the Commission, the Legislature, and other appropriate State agencies the existing reporting format for the system and make appropriate changes in it (p. 4).

Accuracy of Reporting

Course Classification Codes: The extent of the noncredit reporting errors indicates that caution should be used when analyzing noncredit course classification data. The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the usefulness of existing course classification categories with local colleges and develop well-documented guidelines to insure greater accuracy in future reporting (p. 6).

Discipline Codes: The Commission concludes that the level of missing and invalid discipline codes is within reasonable limits of accuracy. In order to promote greater accuracy of reporting, however, the Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the reported discipline codes to determine the extent to which the reported discipline codes conform to State-level guidelines for the assignment of Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) codes (p. 8).

Transfer Status Codes: The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the transfer status data reported by each college with the central offices of the University of California and the California State University. In addition, the Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office modify the structure of the transfer status code to eliminate reporting discrepancies among colleges regarding the transfer status of courses to independent institutions (p. 9).

Student Contact Hours: Due to the severity of the student workload reporting problem, the Commission recommends that no attempt should be made to relate course classification data to ADA until the Chancellor's Office has the opportunity to review student contact hour reporting with individual districts. The Commission further recommends that any analysis of the distribution of courses by student contact hours should exclude colleges with obvious reporting discrepancies and that the Chancellor's Office make the development of accurate student workload information a top priority during the next submittal of course classification data (p. 11).

Uniformity of Reporting the Course Classification Codes

Developmental Education and Community Education: The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office, in cooperation with colleges and Commission staff, produce more definitive guidelines as to what courses should be classified as compensatory and adult elementary and secondary in the developmental education category and in the four areas of community education.

Academic Courses: The Commission also recommends that in reviewing the Course Classification System, the Board of Governors should consider combining the baccalaureate transfer and associate degree categories of liberal arts and sciences education into a single "academic" category, and utilizing the transfer status code to indicate whether or not a particular course is applicable toward transfer or the associate degree (p. 13).

Course Standards and Uniformity

Determination of College Credit: The Commission is in fundamental agreement with the Board of Governors' policy that the determination of credit or noncredit status of courses should be a local educational decision made by district governing boards after consultation with students, faculty, and administrators. The Commission believes, however, that the existing course standards in Section 55002 of Title 5 would be more effective if guidelines were developed for the determination of "appropriate rigor" for a "collegiate course" offered for credit. The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Statewide Academic Senate, Chief Instructional Officers, and other interested organizations, develop such guidelines for local college use in applying these course standards (p. 17-18).

Establishment of a Workload Credit Policy: The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors (1) review existing practices among districts of granting credit for workload purposes, (2) develop State-level policy on the granting of workload credit, and, if appropriate, (3) incorporate relevant guidelines and standards from this policy into Title 5 regulations concerning course standards (p. 18).

Definition of the Scope of Community Service Classes: The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors prepare a policy statement concerning the purposes, scope, and support of community service classes after further review of pertinent course classification and other available data by the Chancellor's Office staff (p. 20).

Credit/Noncredit Funding Differentials

The Commission recommends that, although the evaluation of alternative funding mechanisms must await the development of specific proposals, the Board of Governors and the Legislature should work toward eliminating by the 1983-84 fiscal year funding distinctions based solely on the credit and noncredit status of courses and developing support mechanisms based upon explicit State priorities within the Course Classification System (p. 22).

PREFACE

The California Community Colleges, their Board of Governors, and their Chancellor's Office have developed the Course Classification System over the past several years to describe in a consistent and comprehensive manner the instructional offerings of the Community Colleges. The initial motivation for the system's development came in the wake of Proposition 13, as legislators and other State and local officials attempted to identify new funding priorities in light of revenue reductions. Noncredit instruction in the Community Colleges was removed from State support in the 1978 "bail out" bill (SB 154), which distributed State and local revenues in light of the property tax limitation initiative. In 1979, new Community Colleges finance legislation (AB 8) was enacted which restored funding for the noncredit program but required the Chancellor's Office to conduct a study of noncredit instruction. The final report of that study, approved in principle by the Board of Governors in July 1980, included a new Course Classification System for describing Community College instructional and community service activity, new criteria for the determination of credit and non-credit course offerings, and a number of recommendations for implementing new educational and fiscal policies concerning noncredit offerings.

The Commission reviewed this report in November 1980 and made a number of recommendations concerning it, including:

1. That the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges:
 - a. Implement the Classification System by requiring its use in connection with the updating of the computer course file for 1980-81, with course information to include a designation as (a) credit or noncredit, and (b) transferable to the University of California and/or the California State University and Colleges, as well as (c) location in the Classification System; and
 - b. In consultation with the Commission, establish a date and format for reporting the results of the implementation with the objective of assessing the usefulness of the System in describing Community College offerings in terms of both range of courses offered and level of enrollments generated in the various categories of the System.

In addition, six other Commission recommendations dealt with the need for additional study of specific aspects of the proposed changes in financing mechanisms for the Community Colleges.

As new Community College finance legislation was proposed during the 1981 legislative session, it became evident that the study recommended by the Commission would be impossible until the new classification system was implemented and course-specific data were reported utilizing the new system. Although the Board of Governors had adopted the classification system in principle, the system had not been implemented administratively through Title 5 regulations. AB 1626, therefore, legislatively mandated both the formal adoption of the new classification system by the Board of Governors and the reporting requirement for the Chancellor to provide course information using the new system. In addition, AB 1626 reversed the AB 8 noncredit policy by removing certain noncredit courses from State support and funding the rest of the noncredit program at a lower rate.

The Legislature also specified that it would delete the Community College inflation adjustment from the 1982-83 budget if the classification system was not adopted.

Following the enactment of AB 1626 in June of last year, the Chancellor's Office began to prepare Title 5 regulations and other administrative procedures to implement the provisions of the new law. These implementation procedures were reviewed twice by the Education Policy Committee of the Board of Governors. During this review process, several minor changes were made to the classification system itself. The Board then adopted the regulations at their November 1981 meeting.

During these same months, the Chancellor's Office staff worked with both chief instructional officers and data processing managers of Community College districts to develop reporting procedures that would allow for the timely and accurate submittal of data from districts to the Chancellor's Office. Where possible, they made use of existing reports such as the annual Noncredit Course Inventory and the Course Activity Measures report. Districts were given the option of hand coding the new classification information on keypunch cards or submitting computer tapes containing the needed data.

Title 5 regulations established December 15, 1981, as the due date for the districts to report this information to the Chancellor's Office. During November and December, the districts assigned a course classification code to each course they had offered during 1980-81. By February 1, 1982, all districts had reported. As might be expected, they used a number of different mechanisms to complete this task. Some districts formed new advisory committees to make the course assignments, some used existing curriculum committees, some gave the responsibility to their chief instructional officer, while others utilized computer programs to make the actual assignments of the new codes.

In March, the Chancellor's Office reported the course classification data to the Commission and the Legislature and issued a summary report, Course Classification System: Report of Data Collection and Description of Offerings. This report makes evident the nature and extent of the comprehensive instructional offerings of the California Community Colleges. More than 100,000 courses offered during the 1980-81 year were reported under the new classification structure. Student workload in these courses was measured at nearly one-half billion student contact hours. Yet, the size of the enterprise is not as striking as the diversity among colleges in instructional offerings, priorities, and delivery mechanisms. Such diversity is both a blessing and a curse: a blessing in that it derives from local district ability to develop programs and courses to meet the unique circumstances and clientele of their district, and a curse to those who attempt to describe uniformly and fund equitably the myriad of offerings that make up the California Community Colleges.

The course classification data collection and reporting efforts of the colleges and the Chancellor's Office have done much to improve our knowledge and understanding of Community College offerings. In implementing the Course Classification System and reporting course information based on it, the Community Colleges clearly have met the legislative mandate of AB 1626. Much work remains to be done, however, in bringing more accuracy and uniformity to the reporting of course classification data.

Commission responsibility to review the implementation of the Course Classification System falls into two areas: (1) staff assistance to the Chancellor's Office "in monitoring the collection of the information and determining the format for presentation"; and (2) Commission review of the Chancellor's Office report and adoption of comments to the Legislature concerning the "accuracy and uniformity of the information."

This report fulfills the latter responsibility by providing Commission comment and recommendations on adequacy of procedures and data, as well as on policy issues which the Commission believe warrant further research and discussion among the Community Colleges, the Board of Governors, the Commission, and the Legislature.

As significant as the first year data collection efforts have been, the real test of the usefulness of the information will come in the months ahead. Can this information help to fashion a more equitable funding system for the Community Colleges and resolve questions of academic policy which confront them? If so, the effort will have been worth the substantial costs associated with the project.

PART ONE

ADEQUACY OF PROCEDURES AND DATA

To fulfill its responsibility under AB 1626, the Commission has analyzed the (1) adequacy of reporting procedures, (2) accuracy of reporting, and (3) uniformity of reporting under the Course Classification System.

ADEQUACY OF REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any effective data collection effort of the magnitude of the California Community Colleges Course Classification System depends on the development of clear, uniform, and feasible reporting procedures. In general, the implementation procedures developed by the Chancellor's Office meet these three criteria, with the result of nearly complete reporting of information by all Community College districts that presents a fundamentally accurate description of Community College course offerings during 1980-81. As with the development of any new system, however, the first submission of data by the districts has involved several reporting problems which must be corrected before the next reporting period.

The Commission believes that the reporting of course classification information is an important step forward in State-level understanding of Community College offerings, but that reporting procedures for the future submission of such information can be more efficient and productive. The Commission offers the following observations and recommendations about (1) schedule for implementation, (2) reporting mechanisms, and (3) report formats.

Schedule for Implementation

In November 1981, The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges adopted regulations which (1) implemented the new course classification structure in Title 5 of the Administrative Code, (2) established reporting dates and procedures for the submission and review of the course classification data, and (3) established new course standards for credit, noncredit, and community service offerings. These regulations called for the initial submission of course classification data from Community College districts by December 15, 1981, and final approval of the course classifications by local governing boards by June 30, 1982.

The Chancellor's Office developed this two-phase process to meet the legislatively mandated deadline of March 1982 for initial gathering and reporting of data to the Commission and the Legislature and to allow an initial review of data by the Chancellor's Office before local governing boards take final action on the classification in June.

This schedule for implementing the classification system serves several purposes:

- It provides an opportunity for the Chancellor's Office staff to work with district personnel in an attempt to bring about a more uniform application of the Course Classification System among districts.
- It provides an opportunity for local districts to classify their 1981-82 academic year course offerings, despite the fact that their initial classification of courses was based on 1980-81 offerings because of the March reporting deadline.
- The requirement of formal local board action on course classifications insures that local academic senates, faculty organizations, and other interested parties have a forum for expressing their views on the course designations proposed by the district.
- Finally, the schedule allows the Chancellor's Office the opportunity to make changes in the Course Classification System or procedures should such changes be warranted before the 1982-83 academic year.

The Commission believes that course classification information is essential to better understanding of the role of the California Community Colleges and recommends ongoing implementation of the Course Classification System as part of the annual data collection activities of the Chancellor's Office.

Reporting Mechanisms

The guidelines for data submittal issued by the Chancellor's Office identified the data elements, reporting codes, methods of classifying courses, and the reporting format that colleges should use in submitting course classification data. Commission and legislative staff reviewed the data elements and reporting formats before they were distributed to the colleges, and the Chancellor's Office implemented several suggested changes concerning the format and level of detail in reporting as a result of this review process.

While these procedures functioned adequately for a first-time effort, this was due largely to the time and energy that local administrators, faculty, and the Chancellor's Office staff devoted to the project. Several changes in the guidelines appear to be warranted if this information is to be of ongoing use to State-level policy makers and still not place an undue burden on the colleges. These changes should be made prior to the next submission of course classification data.

This year's guidelines used two separate data bases for colleges to report information on courses: (1) Course Activity Measures, an established part of the Chancellor's Office Information Systems Project, for data on courses offered and student workload in the credit program, and (2) the Noncredit Course Inventory for data on noncredit courses.

This dual reporting system was necessary for this year's data collection due to the time constraints placed on college reporting and because several districts with large noncredit programs had not provided Course Activity Measures data for their noncredit courses. This dual system led, however, to some confusion and variation in the course classification data reported. Two options for reconciling this dual reporting system seem feasible:

Option 1--Modifying the Course Activity Measures Reporting Process: This option would add the course classification code and transfer status code data elements to the existing Course Activity Measures reporting formats and expand the existing fields for course title and instructional discipline information. This option has the advantage of tying the course classification information directly to student workload information contained in the Course Activity Measures reporting system and relating this information to other data elements (such as method of instruction, off-campus status, and course enrollment) which are existing components of the Course Activity Measures system. It also limits the number of courses reported to those which actually are offered in any year. On the negative side, it would require some district expense for modifying existing computer programs, and in the past there has been incomplete data reporting by colleges in the Course Activity Measures system.

Option 2--Developing a Comprehensive Course Inventory: This option would use the just-compiled course classification data to develop an inventory of all credit and noncredit courses which would then be updated for additions, deletions, and changes each year by the colleges. The inventory would include the basic course elements of discipline code, course classification code, course title, and transfer status code, but would not contain student workload information. Workload information would be secured from the Course

Activity Measures report by matching common course identifiers in both systems. This option has the advantage of requiring colleges to provide basic course classification data only once and then updating it for changes as necessary. The disadvantages of this option rest mainly with the potential difficulties in matching common course identifiers, a problem which plagued this year's reporting.

Both options have unique benefits and costs, but it is highly desirable that the Chancellor's Office develop a single system for data reporting before the next data submission by colleges. The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office institute a uniform reporting system for further implementation of the Course Classification System by (1) modifying the Course Activity Measures reporting process or (2) developing a comprehensive inventory of course offerings.

Report Formats

One specific legislative charge in AB 1626 directed the Commission to cooperate with the Chancellor's Office in determining the format for presenting the course classification data submitted by colleges. This consultation process led to agreement on the series of reports to be generated by the Chancellor's Office that are itemized in Appendix A. These reports provide both statewide and college summary statistics as well as detailed listings of course data. A complete set of the reports amount to roughly 7,000 pages of computer output annually.

This level of detail in reporting is essential during the first few cycles of the course classification data submission. Both Chancellor's Office and Commission staff need to review individual course data in order to promote greater uniformity and accuracy of reporting in subsequent reporting cycles. The need for such detailed reports should diminish once the reporting of course classification data has become an ongoing part of the data collection activities of the Chancellor's Office and greater uniformity of reporting has been achieved.

Nonetheless, other reporting requirements will undoubtedly emerge as legislators, agency staff, and local colleges utilize the course classification data. Legislative review of the course classification data will begin this year during the budget process and should do much to define legislative interest in the data and reporting. The Commission recommends that in order to enhance the usefulness of the course classification information the Chancellor's Office review with local colleges, the Board of Governors, the Commission, the Legislature, and other appropriate State agencies the existing reporting format for the system and make appropriate changes in it.

ACCURACY OF REPORTING

AB 1626 charged the Commission to assess the accuracy of course classification data submitted by colleges to the Chancellor's Office. The Commission staff has reviewed the detailed course lists of each college and has found, in general, that the data are within acceptable ranges of accuracy, although the credit course data are much more accurate than those for noncredit courses. Commission staff will submit to the Chancellor's Office a detailed list of questions and observations for each college, based on its review of the submitted data. That report should be of use to the staff of the Chancellor's Office in reviewing the initial data submission with local college personnel before local governing boards take formal action on the course classifications in June. This present report, however, presents statewide summary observations and recommendations about the completeness and accuracy of information in four areas: (1) course classification codes, (2) discipline codes, (3) transfer status codes, and (4) student contact hours. Questions concerning the uniformity of the data submitted are discussed later in this report.

Course Classification Codes

Colleges assigned missing or unrecognizable course classification codes to approximately four percent of their credit courses and 20 percent of their noncredit courses. These latter courses account for nearly 22 percent of the total noncredit workload. As indicated in Table 1, the overall rates of error in the reporting of classification codes were nearly 6 percent in terms of the number of courses and 5 percent in terms of student contact hours (SCH). Several factors appear to have contributed to this level of error:

TABLE 1

EXTENT OF INVALID COURSE CLASSIFICATION CODES BY NUMBER OF COURSES AND STUDENT CONTACT HOURS (SCH)

	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Noncredit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of Invalid Courses	3,808	2,652	6,460
Total Courses Reported	96,899	12,891	109,790
Percentage in Error	3.9%	20.6%	5.9%
SCH in Invalid Courses (millions)	12.986	11.210	24.196
Total SCH Reported (millions)	447.268	51.239	498.507
Percentage in Error	2.9%	21.9%	4.9%

- First, a number of colleges appear to have data processing problems in producing the required information. Such errors should be reduced as the Course Classification System becomes a regular procedure rather than being one-time data collection activity.
- Second, a few colleges appear to have misunderstood the proper course classification coding structure. Although the guidelines and procedures developed by the Chancellor's Office specified the codes to be used for reporting purposes, these codes did not coincide with the previous numbering structures used during the development of the Course Classification System. Errors produced due to such misunderstandings are almost certainly one-time errors and should be corrected with the next submittal of data.
- Third, some colleges which were uncertain about the most appropriate designation for particular courses simply left the classification code blank. As college personnel have additional time to review the data submitted and local boards are required to act officially on the course classification designations, such errors of omission should be reduced significantly.
- Finally, the higher error rate in noncredit than credit reporting appears to be a function of the different reporting mechanisms employed for noncredit and credit courses. College use of the Noncredit Course Inventory was limited by the fact that not all of the courses in the inventory are offered each year. Colleges were required to determine which courses from the inventory were actually offered during 1980-81 and to report the necessary data (including course classification code and student contact hours) only for these courses. This process, often performed manually by local district personnel, appears to have led to the higher incidence of error in the noncredit reporting.

The extent of the noncredit reporting errors indicates that caution should be used when analyzing noncredit course classification data. The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the usefulness of existing course classification categories with local colleges and develop well-documented guidelines to insure greater accuracy in future reporting.

Discipline Codes

The instructional discipline code used by the Chancellor's Office for data reporting is the eight-digit Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) code. This code has been in use by the Community Colleges since January 1979, when it replaced the Classification of Instructional Disciplines (CID) structure. In its full form, the TOP code ex-

presses the discipline, subdiscipline, program, option, level, and sequence number for each course. Depending on the particular reporting requirement, any level of detail may be selected for reporting purposes. For example, the Course Activity Measures report of the Chancellor's Office uses a four-digit subdiscipline level of aggregation, in which a course might be reported as "0504"--the Banking and Finance subdiscipline of the Business and Management major discipline (0500). If a greater level of detail is required, a program indicator may be added, such as "0504.20" (Investments and Securities).

For purposes of the Course Classification System, the Chancellor's Office expanded the normal four-digit reporting required for the Course Activity Measures report to six digits for a limited number of subdisciplines, in order to be able to compare the level of activity in the nine authorized noncredit areas (English as a second language, citizenship, adult basic education, etc.) with activity in similar program areas in the credit program.

Table 2 summarizes the accuracy of the discipline code reporting in the Course Classification System effort. In all, less than 2 percent of all courses reported were classified in unrecognized discipline areas. In terms of student contact hours, only a little over 1 percent were in courses with an invalid discipline code. Again, a higher rate of error occurred among noncredit courses than in credit courses.

A large majority of the courses with invalid discipline codes appear to stem from colleges' failure to record any discipline designation for the course. In a smaller proportion of cases, locally assigned subdiscipline or program codes do not match State-level designations. In such instances, it is probably safe to assume that data are accurate at least to the major discipline level--a fact which usually can be confirmed by examination of the course title. In a few other instances, however, it appears that some colleges have not fully converted from the CID to the TOP reporting structure in their Course Activity Measures reporting.

TABLE 2
EXTENT OF INVALID DISCIPLINE CODES BY
NUMBER OF COURSES AND STUDENT CONTACT HOURS (SCH)

	<u>Credit</u>	<u>Noncredit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of Invalid Courses	1,292	549	1,841
Total Courses Reported	96,899	12,891	109,790
Percentage in Error	1.3%	4.3%	1.7%
SCH in Invalid Courses (millions)	4.400	1.608	6.008
Total SCH Reported (millions)	447.268	51.239	498.507
Percentage in Error	1.0%	3.1%	1.2%

The Commission concludes that the level of missing and invalid discipline codes is within reasonable limits of accuracy. In order to promote greater accuracy of reporting, however, the Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the reported discipline codes to determine the extent to which the reported discipline codes conform to State-level guidelines for the assignment of Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) codes.

Transfer Status Codes

The Course Classification System requires colleges to indicate for each credit course whether or not it is transferable to the University of California, the California State University, or an independent institution. Table 3 summarizes the results of this reporting. The 5,780 courses indicated in the "Other/Unknown" column represent 6 percent of all courses reported. These courses either did not have a transfer status code, had an invalid code, or were transferable only to independent institutions. Because of variations in the manner in which colleges reported the transfer status of their courses to independent institutions, the Chancellor's Office excluded from the transfer analysis of initial data those courses transferable only to the independent segment.

Of all 96,899 credit courses included in Table 3, 45.6 percent are reported to be transferable to the University of California, while 69.2 percent are transferable to the California State University,

TABLE 3
TRANSFER STATUS CODES ASSIGNED TO CREDIT COURSES BY
CATEGORY OF COURSE

Category	Transfer Status							Total
	Non Degree	AA/S Degree	UC Only	CSU Only	UC and CSU Only	UC, CSU and Ind	Other Unknown	
A BA Transfer	0	0	159	5,958	3,261	34,268	585	44,231
B. AA Degree	0	3,445	0	0	0	0	0	3,445
C. Developmental	312	1,546	11	26	0	43	18	1,956
1. Compensatory	300	1,442	11	25	0	39	18	1,835
2 Adult Basic Education	12	104	0	1	0	4	0	121
D Community Education	218	1,049	19	250	14	75	35	1,660
1 Personal Development	107	435	0	148	7	27	23	747
2. Parenting	3	94	0	18	1	2	10	128
3 Community Development	5	94	2	33	2	1	0	137
4 General/Cultural	103	426	17	51	4	45	2	648
E. Occupational	380	16,209	44	16,729	481	5,392	2,564	41,799
F Invalid Code	436	163	18	243	10	360	2,578	3,808
Total	1,346	22,412	251	23,206	3,766	40,138	5,780	96,899

23.1 percent are applicable to an associate degree or certificate program but not transferable, and only 1.4 percent are not applicable toward any degree, certificate, or transfer program.

A review of the detailed course information submitted by colleges indicates that the percentage of courses certified as transferable to the University and the State University is overstated. Improved reporting procedures for transfer status code (especially concerning independent institutions) and review of the initial data by college personnel and district boards should result in further improvements in transfer status reporting. The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office review the transfer status data reported by each college with the central offices of the University of California and the California State University. In addition, the Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office modify the structure of the transfer status code to eliminate reporting discrepancies among colleges regarding the transfer status of courses to independent institutions.

Student Contact Hours

Student workload information is unquestionably the weakest component of the initial data reported under the Course Classification System. Usual measures of student workload, such as number of students enrolled, weekly student contact hours, and average daily attendance (ADA) were either not available or not useful for analyzing course classification data. The Chancellor's Office staff thus utilized total student contact hours as a measure of workload. This measure is comprehensive in its description of instructional activity, and although it bears little relationship to enrollment, it should correspond reasonably well to measures of ADA. This was not the case, however, for many districts' initial submission of course classification data.

For credit courses, the procedures used to develop total student contact hours from Course Activity Measures reports should produce a ratio of about 600 student contact hours (an average of 17 weekly student contact hours over the 35 week academic year) to every ADA. Variations from this ratio may occur because of differences among colleges in their proportion of student workload in short-term, work experience, apprenticeship, independent study, and other categories of courses which use different methods to compute ADA; but ratios between 500:1 and 700:1 should be considered as within a reasonable range, if all course data are reported accurately. Substantial deviations from this range are suspect, however, and should be reviewed by the Chancellor's Office to determine the accuracy of the reported student contact hours.

Table 4 summarizes the range in ratio of credit student contact hours to ADA for the 70 districts. As can be seen, 31 of the 70 fall outside the 500-700 ratio range, while 39 fall within it. Due to this variation in the computation of student contact hours, the summary distributions of student contact hours by course classification category produced by the Chancellor's Office should be used with caution. For example, the four districts with ratios above 800:1 would be weighted in the SCH distributions by more than three times their actual workload, while the seven districts with ratios below 400:1 would be weighted by only one-half of their actual workload value. Elimination of these 11 districts from the student contact hour distributions and review by the Chancellor's Office of the 20 districts in the next lowest and highest ranges could alter the course classification distributions significantly.

The primary cause for these variations appears to be incomplete and inaccurate district reporting of student workload information through the Course Activity Measures report. Independent verification by the Chancellor's Office of reported student contact hours should be made in light of other available data sources such as the President's Report, the apportionment report, and the Student Data System.

Again, data on noncredit courses appear to include greater errors than those on the credit program. A review of the seven largest noncredit programs in the State reveals that one district (North Orange) which accounts for about 9 percent of all noncredit activity in the State did not report any noncredit workload information. This lack of data may produce substantial variation in the distribution of student contact hours by course classification category. Of the other six districts, two that represent over 20 percent of the State's total noncredit workload have ratios of student contact

TABLE 4
RANGE OF STUDENT CONTACT HOURS TO ADA RATIOS

<u>Range</u>	<u>Number of Districts</u>	<u>Percent of SCH Noncredit</u>	<u>Percent of ADA</u>
800:1 and Above	4	15.3	4.6
700:1 - 799:1	9	14.5	13.2
600:1 - 699:1	6	33.6	33.2
500:1 - 599:1	23	23.7	28.6
400:1 - 499:1	11	9.9	13.8
Below 400:1	7	2.9	6.6

hours to ADA of over 1,000:1, indicating that these districts are weighted in the distributions at roughly twice their actual level of activity.

Due to the severity of the student workload reporting problem, the Commission recommends that no attempt should be made to relate course classification data to ADA until the Chancellor's Office has the opportunity to review student contact hour reporting with individual districts. The Commission further recommends that any analysis of the distribution of courses by student contact hours should exclude colleges with obvious reporting discrepancies and that the Chancellor's Office make the development of accurate student workload information a top priority during the next submittal of course classification data.

UNIFORMITY OF REPORTING THE COURSE CLASSIFICATION CODES

No mandate of AB 1626 was more difficult than that calling on the Chancellor's Office to develop standards to insure the uniformity of classification of all courses by July 1, 1982. Given the size and diversity of Community College instructional offerings, this task seems herculean. Initial classification of courses by the colleges, however, provides necessary baseline data as to how they perceive their own instructional offerings. This section of the report assesses the uniformity of reporting Course Classification System data by colleges in the designation of the course classification code. Other issues concerning uniformity that may require action by the Board of Governors or the Legislature are identified in Part Two on later pages.

The uniformity with which colleges applied the Course Classification System to similar types of courses varied among particular course classification categories. In general, similarities exist among colleges in the courses that they classified under either the BA transfer or occupational categories. This is not surprising, since transfer courses to the California State University must be certified as such by each college, and the colleges identify occupational courses for Vocational Education Act funding purposes. Thus the classification of such courses is relatively uniform. In a few instances, however, a review of the detailed course information indicates some questionable classifications which should be reviewed before the next data submission.

College reporting of courses is more uncertain in the remaining three categories of associate degree, developmental education, and community education. In many instances, colleges classified similar

courses in all three categories. This was particularly true of remedial (compensatory), personal development, and art and crafts offerings. A central reason for this disparity appears to be the differing use colleges make of the associate degree category. Some colleges listed any course (including electives) in this category that could possibly be used to meet associate degree unit requirements--including remedial reading, writing, and mathematics, since students may apply a limited number of units from such courses toward associate degree requirements. Twenty-three colleges reported less than 1 percent of their credit workload in the developmental category. Most of these colleges--particularly those with no noncredit program--offer a larger proportion of remedial courses than this and have categorized them elsewhere. Differing college definitions of what constitutes remedial courses lead to disparities in classifying such courses as elementary algebra and basic sentence structure. In most instances, colleges classified them in either the associate degree or compensatory categories. Fewer numbers of such courses were classified in the adult elementary and secondary education category, and still fewer as BA transfer or community education courses. The remediation study currently being conducted by the Commission staff will analyze classification and workload information for courses which meet the study's definition of remedial education.

Similar kinds of reporting disparities occur in the community education categories. Some colleges placed physical education courses such as jogging, jazzercise, aerobic dance, and general fitness in this category, but the majority classified them in the BA transfer category because four-year colleges accept them as elective credits for transfer, and a few classified them in the associate degree category. Courses in beginning photography, piano, guitar, and drawing also were classified in a variety of categories, including BA transfer, associate degree, personal development, and general and cultural.

This disparity in classification reflects the difficulty of defining the primary objective of a course when students enroll in it for a variety of reasons. To some extent, the disparity also reflects differences in instructional methodology and the rigor with which courses are taught. Such differences cannot be determined at the State level by using only course titles for analysis. Thus the exact extent of the uniformity of classification of courses must remain unknown unless the State were to undertake an exhaustive study of individual course outlines at local colleges. Such a study, however, would produce results of limited value when compared to its costs.

Both the Chancellor's Office and the Commission staff recognize the significant lack of uniformity in the reporting of certain categor-

ies of course classification data. The Chancellor's Office staff estimate that as much as 5 percent of the total reported workload may need to be moved from the BA transfer and associate degree categories to the developmental and community education. An accurate and consistent reclassification of courses is essential, and should be made by the Chancellor's Office in cooperation with local colleges and the Commission staff as they review initial data between now and June.

The Commission recommends that the Chancellor's Office, in cooperation with colleges and Commission staff, produce more definitive guidelines as to what courses should be classified as compensatory and adult elementary and secondary in the developmental education category and in the four areas of community education.

The Commission also recommends that in reviewing the Course Classification System, the Board of Governors should consider combining the baccalaureate transfer and associate degree categories of liberal arts and sciences education into a single "academic" category, and utilizing the transfer status code to indicate whether or not a particular course is applicable toward transfer or the associate degree.

PART TWO

POLICY ISSUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

The Commission believes that several policy questions deriving from the initial Course Classification System report warrant further research and discussion among the Community Colleges, the Chancellor's Office and Board of Governors, the Commission, and the Legislature. In most instances, the primary responsibility for the review of these issues lies with the Board of Governors, and the Commission recognizes that the scope of these issues is substantial, that the Board will need to schedule their review over some time in light of its priorities and staff resources. The Commission is convinced, however, that the resolution of these issues is important to the health and stability of Community College operations.

COURSE STANDARDS AND UNIFORMITY

The "issue" of Community College credit versus noncredit offerings has dominated discussions of Community College finance during the past two legislative sessions. This "issue" is not actually a single problem but rather a variety of policy issues, some fiscal and some academic. Three of them warrant particular attention: (1) determination of college credit, (2) establishment of a workload credit policy, and (3) definition of the scope of community service classes.

Determination of College Credit

In AB 1626, the Legislature required that the Board of Governors "develop classification criteria which shall establish uniformity of classification of credit and noncredit modes among all districts by July 1, 1982." To meet this mandate, the Board of Governors adopted new Title 5 regulations in November 1981 which established standards and criteria for courses and classes (see Appendix B for text). These regulations differ from previous statutory standards for awarding credit in several significant ways.

Previous standards defined credit courses as those which were either (1) certified to transfer to an accredited public or private four-year institution, or (2) part of a certificate or degree program of the college. All other courses were deemed to be non-credit. The new Title 5 regulations are both more comprehensive and less precise than this previous definition. They are more

comprehensive in that they specify a variety of educational considerations, including course outlines, student evaluation and grading, and meeting of prerequisites, which must be met if a course is to be offered for credit. They are less precise in that they replace the transfer and program requirement with the provision that a credit course be "recommended by the responsible college officials and the appropriate faculty body as being of appropriate rigor and has been approved by the local district governing board as a collegiate course meeting the needs of the students eligible for admission" (Title 5, Section 55002, of the Administrative Code; underlining added).

This provision reflects the Board of Governors' policy adopted in 1979 that "the determination of 'credit' or 'noncredit' status of a community college course is an educational matter which should be determined by the educational community in the colleges in accordance with minimum standards established by the Board of Governors and policies adopted by local district governing boards" (Chancellor's Office, 1979, page 13). Clearly, the determination as to what is of "appropriate rigor" to be a "collegiate course" varies among the 70 districts and 106 colleges. As indicated previously, initial course classification data indicate that this variation is particularly great in the areas of developmental and community education.

The Title 5 regulations adopted by the Board of Governors in November 1981 require that local governing boards, in consultation with local academic senates or other appropriate faculty bodies, formally adopt a course classification designation and a credit/noncredit designation for each course offered by the district. This procedure will insure that districts have an open and full discussion concerning which courses should be offered for credit; however, it will not insure uniformity in the determination of credit and noncredit offerings. Even if the Board defined with great precision what is "appropriate rigor" to constitute a collegiate course, a variety of other factors, including differences in student clientele and instructional strategies, would determine whether or not a particular course is offered for credit. Existing funding differentials between credit and noncredit offerings may also affect local decisions concerning credit and noncredit determinations.

One purpose of the Course Classification Study was to provide the Legislature with an indication of credit course activity in subject areas similar to the nine "protected" noncredit areas identified in AB 1626. Such an assessment is not possible for all nine subject areas. The AB 1626 categories of "Education for Older Adults" or "Short-Term Vocational Courses with High Employment Potential" do not correspond to either Course Classification or TOP categories. Some assessment can be made for a number of the AB 1626 categories, however, and results of this analysis are indicated below.

Table 5 summarizes the reported levels of credit and noncredit courses and student contact hours (SCH) in five of the nine AB 1626 categories: (1) Adult Basic Education, (2) English as a Second Language (ESL), (3) Citizenship, (4) Handicapped Education, and (5) Parenting.

The data in this table are derived from statewide summary reports by discipline and course classification category which were produced by the Chancellor's Office. For the first four categories, the information was produced by summing college credit and noncredit activity for the following TOP code categories: (1) Adult Basic Education (4930.60), (2) ESL (4930.80), (3) Citizenship (4930.90), (4) Handicapped Education (0801.10 and 4930.30). Credit and non-credit activity in the parenting category was that reported by colleges in the parenting and family support area within the community education categories of the Course Classification System.

It is impossible to determine from such summary statistics the extent to which credit and noncredit courses in these areas are designed to reach similar clientele or to meet common educational objectives. Uniformity in the determination of the credit status of courses cannot be determined from the subject matter alone.

Given the complexity in the determination of credit and noncredit course offerings, what is the appropriate State-level role in this determination? The Commission is in fundamental agreement with the Board of Governors' policy that the determination of credit or noncredit status of courses should be a local educational decision made by district governing boards after consultation with students,

TABLE 5
CREDIT AND NONCREDIT COURSES AND STUDENT CONTACT HOURS
IN SPECIFIED SUBJECT AREAS

Category	Credit		Noncredit	
	Number of Courses	SCH (millions)	Number of Courses	SCH (millions)
1. Adult Basic Education	250	1.830	193	1.130
2. ESL	279	4.697	126	7.842
3. Citizenship	48	.053	42	.042
4. Handicapped Education	435	.662	177	1.006
5. Parenting	128	.159	806	1.034

faculty, and administrators. The Commission believes, however, that the existing course standards in Section 55002 of Title 5 would be more effective if guidelines were developed for the determination of "appropriate rigor" for a "collegiate course" offered for credit. The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Statewide Academic Senate, Chief Instructional Officers, and other interested organizations, develop such guidelines for local college use in applying these course standards.

Establishment of a Workload Credit Policy

Should courses that are not applicable toward associate degree or certificate programs be exclusively noncredit, or should colleges be authorized to grant "workload" units of credit for them? The course classification information reveals differences among colleges on this issue. It indicates that several colleges offer credit courses which they do not accept for associate degree or certificate credit. These courses are primarily in the developmental education category in the areas of adult basic education, special education for physically and mentally handicapped students, and compensatory (remedial) education, although a few are found in the community education category as personal development or general and cultural courses.

The basic policy issue is academic in nature and involves questions of (1) instructional strategies to motivate students, (2) academic quality, and (3) recognition of differing student clientele. Yet there is no clear State-level policy which indicates whether or not "workload" credit is a legitimate option for local districts. Given the current funding differential between credit and noncredit courses in the Community Colleges, State-level policy in this area is essential. Under previous statutory definitions of a credit course, such courses clearly would be considered noncredit for apportionment purposes. Under the new Title 5 regulations, the determination of such courses as credit courses rests upon the definition of "appropriate rigor" for a "collegiate course."

The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors (1) review existing practices among districts of granting credit for workload purposes, (2) develop State-level policy on the granting of workload credit, and, if appropriate, (3) incorporate relevant guidelines and standards from this policy into Title 5 regulations concerning course standards.

Definition of the Scope of Community Service Classes

Districts offer instruction through the community service option for a variety of reasons: such classes have much flexibility in terms of length, time, location, use of noncredentialed instructors, and instructional content. They may be developed quickly to meet community concerns and interests without the detailed review normally associated with the curriculum development process. As such, they can serve as a testing ground for instructional content which may be developed later into a course within the regular credit or noncredit program. They do not require formal evaluation of student performance; thus they are able to attract some students who may otherwise be reluctant to enter the normal college curriculum. Although instruction in such classes may not be reported for apportionment purposes, student fees may be charged for them in order to meet the costs of instruction.

Colleges did not report student workload for community service classes in the initial course classification data, yet the extent and types of course titles give some indication of the scope of community service activity among the colleges. The level of activity in these classes should increase during the current year as certain categories of noncredit classes are moved to a fee support basis as required by AB 1626.

A large range presently exists in the number of community service classes offered by colleges. For example, 21 colleges reported offering no community service classes during the 1980-81 year, although nine of them were in multi-college districts where district offices or other colleges within the district reported such class offerings. A majority of the 21 reported no or extremely limited noncredit course workload, while a few had a significant portion of their total student workload in noncredit courses.

Detailed analysis of such differences among colleges in credit/noncredit/community service offerings will require more information than is available from the initial submission of course classification data. Nonetheless, it is evident from the titles of community service classes that in the areas of physical conditioning, arts and crafts, cultural, and personal development classes, a wide variety of practices exists among colleges in offering such courses in credit, noncredit, or community service modes. Given the current differentials in funding and student fee policies among these three areas, it is important to understand more completely the differences among districts in methods of delivery.

This year the Chancellor's Office made a determination as to which previously offered noncredit courses should be moved to community

service offerings. But should that range of courses be expanded or reduced? What should determine whether a course is offered as a community service class--its subject matter, its duration, its clientele and their ability to pay, the evaluation of student performance, or all of these factors? Should the State support a portion of the instructional costs for community service classes? Are students being treated in an equitable fashion among districts with respect to student fees for similar types of instruction? These are a few of the policy questions which should be reviewed with respect to the community service function in the Community Colleges. The Commission recommends that the Board of Governors prepare a policy statement concerning the purposes, scope, and support of community service classes after further review of pertinent course classification and other available data by the Chancellor's Office staff.

CREDIT/NONCREDIT FUNDING DIFFERENTIALS

AB 1626 established differential rates of support for Community College credit and noncredit average daily attendance (ADA), with noncredit ADA receiving approximately \$175 per growth ADA less than credit ADA. While this provision marked the first time in recent years that funding differentials were established for Community Colleges based solely on credit/noncredit distinctions, funding for noncredit courses has been uncertain during this period. SB 154, passed in the wake of Proposition 13, provided a "block grant" to districts at roughly 8 percent below prior year revenues and prohibited any State support to be provided for noncredit courses outside six "protected" categories. While this prohibition had little impact on district revenues due to the block grant mechanism, it did allow districts to charge fees for noncredit courses and placed the future funding of such courses in doubt.

AB 8 (Greene, 1979) restored funding for all noncredit course offerings and required the Chancellor's Office to conduct a study of credit and noncredit courses in the Community Colleges. This study led to the development of the classifications used in the Course Classification System. AB 1626 (Hughes, 1981) required the Board of Governors to implement the system and to report on all courses offered by Community Colleges based on it. AB 1626 also eliminated funding for noncredit courses outside nine protected categories and established differential support rates for credit and noncredit ADA.

Several arguments can be made to support the funding differentials imposed by AB 1626. First, some noncredit courses offered in the

Community Colleges are similar in character to courses offered in K-12 adult schools. Such courses include adult basic education, high school diploma programs, English as a second language, and citizenship training. Although the support rates for K-12 adult schools vary throughout the State, on the average the support rate is under \$1,000 per ADA. Proponents of the funding differential argue that by fixing the Community College support rate at \$1,100 per ADA and allowing adult schools to "catch up" to this level of support through inflation adjustments, existing incentives for Community Colleges to offer adult education will be eliminated.

A second argument in support of the funding differentials is that, in the aggregate, noncredit courses cost less to operate than credit courses. Detailed information on noncredit course expenditures per ADA has not been collected for the past several years, but data collected over the previous decade indicates that noncredit course expenditures per ADA are roughly two-thirds those of the credit program.

Finally, some argue that the noncredit program is of lower priority than the credit program. Except under limited circumstances, noncredit courses cannot be utilized to fulfill requirements for degree programs. As indicated by the changes in the "protected" and "unprotected" noncredit categories over time and the requirement for the course classification study, State policy makers are still trying to resolve the question of personal and public benefit of courses and to relate these benefits to priorities for State support. In spite of much discussion, and the placement of many personal development and enrichment courses in the community service area supported by user fees, the "macrame syndrome" has never been fully resolved. As such, the noncredit status of a course is judged by some to serve as a proxy for lower priority and thus lower support rates.

The Board of Governors and the Chancellor's Office argue that the credit/noncredit status of a course is not sufficient in and of itself to determine the educational level, purpose, cost, or priority of a course. For example, the San Francisco City Centers offer a noncredit vocational nursing program at a cost similar to credit nursing programs elsewhere. Graduates of the program pass licensure exams at rates equal to those in credit programs statewide. Clearly this is a program of public benefit, moderate cost, and relatively high priority in the State interest, yet it is supported at a lower rate than similar credit programs. The Community Colleges argue that credit/noncredit funding distinctions are decidedly imperfect proxies for an equitable system of finance. The Course Classification System is designed to present a more detailed and meaningful description of Community College offerings on which academic and fiscal policy judgments can be made.

While it is still too early in the reporting process to resolve this funding issue, several observations can be made from the initial course classification information. It is evident that there is substantial variation among colleges as to whether personal development and recreational courses are offered as credit, non-credit, or community service courses. Given the current funding structure, this variation among colleges inevitably leads to questions of equity of support for similar kinds of courses. Also, the Course Classification System and the Taxonomy of Programs allow State and local policy makers to discuss questions of priorities and levels of support for different categories of courses in a much more comprehensive fashion than simple credit/noncredit distinctions.

The Commission recommends that, although the evaluation of alternative funding mechanisms must await the development of specific proposals, the Board of Governors and the Legislature should work toward eliminating by the 1983-84 fiscal year funding distinctions based solely on the credit and noncredit status of courses and developing support mechanisms based upon explicit State priorities within the Course Classification System.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF COURSE CLASSIFICATION REPORTS

1. Workload summary (total student contact hours) and percent of total workload by College and Classification Category.
2. Statewide Summary of number of courses and workload (total student contact hours) for credit and noncredit offerings by academic discipline within Classification Category.
3. Statewide Summary of credit and noncredit courses and workload by transfer category and academic discipline within Classification Category.
4. Summary of credit and noncredit courses and workload offered at each college by academic discipline within each Classification Category.
5. Summary of number of courses by academic discipline within Classification Category in each transfer category.
6. Detail report of all course titles offered at each college by TOP code, classification code and transfer code.
7. Detail report of all courses offered at each college in selected TOP codes by credit or noncredit mode, classification code and transfer code.
8. Detail report of all courses offered at each college by credit or noncredit mode, transfer code, units and workload in each TOP code within each Classification Category.

APPENDIX B

SECTION 55002, TITLE 5, ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

55002. Standards and Criteria for Courses and Classes

- (a) A credit course is a course which, at a minimum:
 - (1) Is recommended by the responsible college officials and the appropriate faculty body as being of appropriate rigor and has been approved by the local district governing board as a collegiate course meeting the needs of the students eligible for admission.
 - (2) Is taught by a credentialed instructor.
 - (3) Is offered as described in an outline and/or curriculum guide in official college files. That outline and/or curriculum guide shall specify the unit value, scope, objectives, content, instructional methodology and methods of evaluation for determining whether the stated objectives have been met by students.
 - (4) Is taught in accordance with a set of instructional objectives common to all students.
 - (5) Provides for measurement of student performance in terms of the stated course objectives and culminates in a formal recorded grade based upon uniform standards which is permanently recorded and is available as an official student evaluation.
 - (6) Grants units of credit based upon a specified relationship between the number of units assigned to the course and the number of lecture and/or laboratory hours or performance criteria specified in the course outline.
 - (7) Only those students who have met the prerequisites for the course are enrolled.
 - (8) Allows repeated enrollment only as permitted by provisions of Division 2.
- (b) A noncredit course is a course which, at a minimum:
 - (1) Is approved by the local district governing board as a course meeting the educational needs of the enrolled students.
 - (2) Is taught by a credentialed instructor. A supplementary lecturer need not hold a credential if he or she lectures fewer than four times in a semester or quarter.
 - (3) Treats subject matter and uses resource materials, teaching methods, and standards of attendance and achievement appropriate for the enrolled students.
 - (4) Is conducted in accordance with a course outline and/or curriculum guide in official college files. That outline and/or curriculum guide shall specify the scope, objectives, content, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation for determining whether the course objectives have been met.

- (c) A community services class at a minimum:
- (1) Is approved by the local district governing board.
 - (2) Is designed for the physical, mental, moral, economic, or civic development of persons enrolled therein.
 - (3) Provides subject matter content, resource materials, and teaching methods appropriate for the enrolled students.
 - (4) Is conducted in accordance with a predetermined strategy or plan.
 - (5) Is open to all members of the community.
 - (6) Attendance in community services classes may not be claimed for apportionment purposes.
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